

5 June 1981
MLD-1022

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS

FROM: Chief, London Bureau

THROUGH: Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT: Monthly Report -- London Bureau -- May 1981

I. GENERAL

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II. OPERATIONS

A. Editorial/Monitorial

1. The Polish crisis and Yugoslavia's domestic contentions and war of words with Albania stemming from Albanian nationalism in Kosovo Province were the main focus of attention during a month marked by several headline grabbers. Efforts to cover the hijackings of an Aer Lingus 737 to France and of a Turkish Airlines DC-9 to Bulgaria involved the monitoring of an unusual source, Dublin Domestic, a close watch on Voice of Turkey's English service, and coverage of Sofia BTA during periods when the Austrian Bureau was closed. Increased coverage of Paris, Vatican, Rome and Madrid radios produced timely reports on the French presidential elections, the assassination attempt on the pope, and the seizure of a Barcelona bank by gunmen. The first priority item to be filed from OPECNA came on the 26th: the concluding press release on the OPEC conference in Geneva at which oil prices were frozen.

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2. London Bureau played a supportive role in the FBIS effort to monitor the Lebanon conflict. PMU monitors [redacted] were called in to cover Cairo Domestic Service and MENA on one weekend after Nicosia Bureau requested assistance in mounting an overnight watch on the Lebanese crisis and the BBC was unable to help. Despite reception problems, our veteran Kyrenia hands produced an As-Sadat speech and several other significant items. STAT
Bad policy!
3. The BBC also encountered reception difficulties in backstopping MENA on earlier occasions at Nicosia's request. PARS was unmonitorable at Caversham throughout most of the month. EAU continues to have problems hearing Omdurman and Kampala radios. Details have been reported to FCS.
4. After the usual coordination PMU transferred coverage of Abu Dhabi AL-ITTIHAD and AL-ITTIHAD AL-USBU'I and Kuwait AR-RA'Y AL-'AMM and AS-SIYASAH to Gulf Bureau. This permitted PMU to pick up coverage of the Beirut papers AL-BAYRAQ, AN-NAHAR, and AS-SAFIR from Nicosia, where receipts have been erratic. This coverage transfer became effective with papers dated 1 June.
5. NEAAD took over PMU's Persian coverage and some of its Arabic coverage during the month to cover for monitors' annual leave.
6. At Headquarters request, PMU's French/Polish monitor is now devoting all his time to Polish press translations. During the month he processed nine items, five of which came from regional newspapers, and one of which was a 12-take item from TRYBUNA LUDU. PMU is now receiving TRYBUNA LUDU through regular subscription. Efforts continue to locate someone to do Polish translations under contract.

B. Cologne Unit

1. West German reaction to Chancellor Schmidt's recent foreign visits provided substantial work for the Unit during May. The Unit filed the government statement Schmidt made in the Bundestag following his trip to Saudi Arabia, as well as remarks made by foreign Minister Genscher in the debate that followed.

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2. The Unit also filed considerable comment on the Berlin election defeat of the SPD-FDP coalition and subsequent efforts to form a new city government.
3. The Unit responded to an urgent request from the Tel Aviv Bureau for the text of an FRG television interview with Chancellor Schmidt, filing a two-take out of turn excerpt on 5 May and following that up with the remaining four takes the next day.

C. Communications

1. A 16-hour Mode I outage on 22 May was initially caused by a line fault between the Bureau and Croughton ASC. It is suspected that the outage was prolonged by incorrect fault handling at Tech Control Croughton. Investigations are continuing. Altroutes during this outage were via the Bureau's Mode V and Headquarters. High-precedence items were not significantly delayed.
2. Croughton's planned downtime of 6 hours on 24 May was cancelled. Pirmasens' planned downtime of 48 hours on 30 May was rescheduled for 6 June. If planned altroutes for the Austrian Bureau fail, London Bureau is prepared to provide support.

III. ADMINISTRATION

- A. Editor [] departed PCS on 18 May for home leave in the States and reassignment to the Okinawa Bureau. STAT
- B. Senior Editor [] departed PCS on 5 June for home leave and reassignment to the Wire Service. STAT

IV. VISITS

- A. [] of ED&SS and contractor [] departed 9 and 14 May respectively after TDY to erect the dish antenna. STAT
- B. Bangkok Bureau Chief [] visited the bureau en route back from the bureau chiefs conference on 7 May. STAT

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- C. The new U.S. ambassador to the UK, John J. Louis, Jr., briefly visited the bureau's administrative office in the Embassy on 22 May and met the acting bureau chief, administrative officer and local administrative assistants. This was part of his initial get-acquainted tour of all Embassy offices.



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Attachments

cc: Chief, Austrian Bureau
Chief, Cologne Unit